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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 001771

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2018
TAGS: PREL PGOV MD RS
SUBJECT: DAS MERKEL'S MEETING WITH TRANSNISTRIA NEGOTIATOR
NESTERUSHKIN

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel A. Russell. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) In a short June 19 meeting, GOR Special Negotiator for the Transnistria conflict Valeriy Nesterushkin briefed EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Merkel on recent developments.

Nesterushkin said that the conflict was entering an "exciting" period, and highlighted Security Council Deputy Secretary Zubakov's June 18-21 visit to Tiraspol and Chisinau. According to Nesterushkin, Zubakov met with Smirnov on June 18 and would meet Voronin on June 19. After the Zubakov - Smirnov meeting, Tiraspol issued a press release forecasting that Medvedev and Smirnov would meet before the end of the year. Nesterushkin maintained that for Tiraspol, it was Russia, not Moldova, that mattered. Nesterushkin plans to visit Kyiv on June 24 to learn more about Ukrainian FM Ohryzko's June 14 meeting with Smirnov, which the Ukrainians touted as "groundbreaking." Nesterushkin suspected that the GOU was trying to make Odessa the permanent base for 5 plus 2 meetings; the GOR had no objection, but thought that the attempt would not succeed.

¶2. (C) DAS Merkel stressed that meetings for the sake of meetings would not help the process. Instead, the main players should make an effort to use meetings and events in pursuit of a concrete goal. DAS Merkel thought the location of the 5 plus 2 meetings was of no importance, but worried that the participants might lose confidence in the process if there was a prolonged period without results. Nesterushkin thought it was important that the dialogue continue regardless.

¶3. (C) Nesterushkin said that Romanian President Basescu planned to visit Moscow soon. With Romania desiring to be recognized for its "contribution" to the Transnistria negotiation process, there was a talk of a new format: Ukraine, Romania and Moldova, he added. DAS Merkel inquired about the sequencing of the Medvedev meeting, the 5 2, and the importance of flowing into the 5 2 format.

¶4. (C) DAS Merkel asked if the GOR concerns regarding neutrality were satisfied with the Constitution and National Security strategy. Nesterushkin said that with all capitals' consent, basic elements of neutrality could be secured and accepted.

¶5. (C) DAS Merkel and Nesterushkin agreed on early September consultations in Washington.
RUSSELL